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Is our Central Intelligence Agency to blame for Cuba's plight? See
Drew Pearson's informative column on today's Spotlight Page.
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Victor Riesel, plus a revealing report on the GOP from Fulton Lewis Jr.,
in the nation's capital.

WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

Says CIA to Blame For Cuban Fiasco

By DREW PEARSON

WASHINGTON, April 24—The tragedy of the Cuban Freedom Fighters points directly to one of the most mysterious, most powerful agencies of government—Central Intelligence.

Sitting on a bluff overlooking the gorge of the Potomac River above Washington, this so-called "super-duper spy agency" is just as aloof in actual operation as in its location. Its members don't have to answer to Congress. Its accounts are not scrutinized by the general accounting office. In fact, its personnel is not even known.

Every other department is required to publish the number of its personnel and the names of its personnel. But not Central Intelligence. Every other department of government is required to give an accounting to Congress of funds spent before it gets more money. Not Central Intelligence.

Established after the war to engage quite frankly in espionage and undercover activities, Central Intelligence is a necessary offshoot of the cold war. And it has scored some important achievements. It has also let the USA in for some tragic defeats.

Because of these defeats, there's growing sentiment on Capitol Hill to make Central Intelligence just as answerable for an accounting as any other agency. In a government of checks and balances which has done a pretty good job through the years, Central Intelligence is the only bureau not subject either to check or balance.

IN THE CUBAN ~~case~~ ^{case}, Central Intelligence began working on an invasion by exiles long before Kennedy entered office. Cuban volunteers were secretly trained and equipped in Guatemala and Nicaragua.

The invasion was first scheduled for last November, but President Eisenhower ~~was~~ assured it proper to check with the man who was to succeed him, and when he outlined the plan to Kennedy, the latter seemed ~~to~~ ^{to} back. He did not say anything against going ahead, but ~~the~~ ^{he} sensed that he might be opposed, so held up the invasion.

Kennedy's ~~was~~ ^{first} announcement, the day after his election, was the removal of Allen Dulles, brother of the late John Foster Dulles, as CIA Director. Kennedy's ~~was~~ ^{first} announcement of the CIA plan to back the Cuban exiles' invasion of Cuba.



ALLEN BULLES

There is no criticism on Capitol Hill of the idea behind the plan. There is great criticism of the manner in which it was carried out.

Some exiled leaders argued strongly against a direct invasion, wanted to have small groups infiltrate the Escambray Mountains instead. But the CIA was committed to the original invasion plan. It proceeded as planned.

ACTUALLY THE invasion was more of a fiasco than generally reported. The CIA had hoped for a mass uprising. Again some exiled leaders warned that Castro had won the loyalty of the peasants with food, land and medicine; that they wouldn't revolt.

Only one landing force reached its objective. This force has now joined the guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains. The other landing forces were largely evacuated, though several were left behind. Many are probably casualties; the others possibly have fled to the mountains.

The whole episode can only be described as a CIA fiasco. Our cloak-and-dagger boys have been playing a grim game with the lives of Cuban freedom fighters, many of whom have now been abandoned. One reason President Kennedy is now considering more direct intervention is the moral obligation we owe to the freedom fighters we left behind.

The Cuban failure comes on top of some other CIA failures which have contributed seriously to this country's lessened prestige